

News Connection

A monthly newsletter for DSHS staff and friends



It's showtime at Echo Glen Children's Center

Pre-performance jitters filled the air. The select audience walked by the marquee stating "Romeo and Juliet and other creative writings, written and performed by students from Copalis Cottage Ensemble."

The seven girls and one boy donned their capes and masks, grasped their lines firmly in their hands and faced their audience. The play opened with nervous, brave actors, as happens in schools across the state.

But this play was a bit different. The actors' lives are more complicated. They are serving juvenile offender sentences at Echo Glen Children's Center near Snoqualmie.

The production was the brainchild of Susan Warner, director of the Experimental Gallery. "It's an idea we've been playing with for years. We thought, wouldn't it be wonderful to do Shakespeare at Echo Glen?"

When the idea was presented to Echo Glen administrators, "We said, yes, we can do that," said Patti Berntsen, associate superintendent.

That's not to say some weren't nervous about how well the one-time program would

work. "Quite frankly, there were some nervous administrators because of the "S"-word issues," said Brad Beach, program manager of Copalis Cottage.

The famous climax of the play focuses on dual suicides by Romeo and Juliet. Copalis Cottage houses children with

mental health issues. Many of these 13-18-year-olds seriously contemplate suicide.

Behavior was another concern. "These kids have a lot of behaviors that they've internalized in order to survive, and not all are functional behaviors," said Chairein Coughtry, their teacher. "This group is likely to blow up at any moment. All these kids have big issues, more than I can imagine carrying around. This play was a huge challenge for them."

Actor Craig Williams and poet Judith Roche worked intensively with the students, two hours a day for three weeks. Students learned Shakespeare's words, at the same time exploring emotions, teamwork, and letting go of personal dislikes, according to Coughtry. "They learned they have a power they didn't know they had. We worked through issues as a team."

The students did some writing, incorporating their thoughts and words into the bard's 14th Century English.

With confidence and clearly articulated words, the eight troubadours captured the imagination of the small audience with their intensity and skills.

Bowing to an impressed audience, the actors flashed bright smiles.

Still in the flush of the play's energy, the students shared some of their thoughts before

and after the play.

"I wasn't going to do this (perform). I was going to be sick. I thought people would laugh if I messed up. I didn't want to do it. I just got some courage because of my friends. Thank you guys for coming."

"At first it was very hard, but after three weeks I got used to being around a lot of people."

"I just want to say that we're not all bad. Not everything we do is bad, because people in here tried really hard to get this play going."

"Most of the time I have a really bad attitude and yesterday I was mad and ready to go off. I knew I had this play coming up and I didn't want to mess that up. I've changed so much."

In order to perform the play, the students could have no negative behavior marks. One particularly destructive youth managed to stay out of trouble the entire week leading up to the performance - a record.

"This group had only three weeks to prepare," said Beach. "The changes in their behavior have been dramatic. I know what it took for them to get here. I'm very proud of them."

The play was funded by the King County Arts Commission and the Washington State Arts Commission. Warner said the Experimental Gallery plans to seek a grant to do such drama productions on a larger scale.

For the students and administrators at Echo Glen, the effort was a resounding success.

Superintendent Don Mead told the actors, "This was a very big challenge. You invested so much. I want to thank you so much. You have given us some insight of what you are capable. You're very important."

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DSHS completes transition from food stamp coupons to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Program

Current welfare and food stamp clients across the state no longer use paper food stamp coupons to purchase their groceries. Now they simply pull out their new Quest cards and use their unique personal identifier code (PIN).

The QUEST cards offer a safe, convenient and accountable method of distributing benefits without the use of paper stamps or

coupons, according to Renia Neuhauser, program administrator with Economic Services Administration

The cards can be used at retail point-of-sale debit machines for food purchases and sometimes cash. Cash benefits can also be obtained from QUEST cardholder accounts at participating automatic teller machines.

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Secretary's
corner
by Lyle Quasim



Words about our work

Employees, clients, and the public share thoughts on the work we do

Send your thoughts and/or letters from clients to Secretary Lyle Quasim, attention: Letters to The News Connection, P.O. Box (Mailstop) 45010, Olympia WA 98504; via e-mail Quasil@dshs.wa.gov



If you work for DSHS and you think that people are out to get you, you're not necessarily paranoid.

There are a lot of people who think that DSHS is either an uncaring, lazy, bureaucracy, or an intrusive, interfering Big Brother.

And some of the people who hold these very negative opinions are reporters, legislators, local community leaders, and even clients of DSHS.

In fact, often it's the people we do the most for who love us the least.

Sometimes, we get in trouble for not being intrusive enough. At other times, we get in trouble for being too intrusive. And no matter what we do or how well we do it, we are always on the front line when the state budget needs to be cut.

This could certainly make us all defensive, if not paranoid.

But we shouldn't let that happen, because to do our jobs well, we need to be optimists.

We need to be optimists because what our clients need most from us is hope. And we can't give them hope if we don't have it ourselves.

So I want to tell you why we should all be hopeful.

DSHS is an instrument of Washington state's conscience. No one is always happy with the condition of their conscience.

But no one wants to be without a conscience either. A conscience is something we always wrestle with.

A conscience is something that makes us better — but it's also something that makes us work harder, think harder, and face up to our own faults and weaknesses.

But what's most important is that the human conscience is the wellspring of hope.

As long as the people of Washington state have a conscience, DSHS will be in business.

Lyle Quasim

Dear Secretary Lyle Quasim,

In this section of The NewsConnection we read letters of appreciation from satisfied consumers. These always lift our spirits and give us incentive to keep up our commitment to the challenge of our jobs in this agency.

We in District 4B would like to share with you one of those letters, written by a family member who lives out of state and has dealt with a multitude of problems concerning his cord-injured brother over the past one and a half years.

While this letter is several months old, this district is still very much in touch with this family member and continues to assist him in dealing long distance with the issues of care for his brother,

Bett Schlemmer has been a nurse complaint investigator for this district for several years. While Bett and I have been the principal contacts for this family member, the care and concern that he identifies does, I think, exemplify the work of the entire district. As he says, we do attempt to "humanize the bureaucracy."

Pat Kennings, Manager,
Aging and Adult Services Administration,
Residential Care Services,
District 4B (Seattle)

Dear Ms. Kennings,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my family because I need to express our appreciation for the work done by yourself and your staff. While I am hesitant to single out one individual among the many who work for you, I feel compelled to do so in the case of Ms. Bett Schlemmer.

As you know, my family was abruptly thrown into the world of spinal cord injuries (recently). We have been struggling to deal with the problems that have arisen involving the care our brother has been receiving at (two care centers). The toll taken on my family because of the irresponsible actions and care provided by the individuals working in these facilities has been considerable.

It has been our good fortune to have discovered your organization and being able to present our concerns. In my dealings with Ms. Schlemmer, I found an individual who consistently displayed objectivity, professionalism, knowledge, insight, and concern necessary to investigate and evaluate the care my brother was receiving. Her ability to humanize the bureaucracy (the health care industry) for

us has been a breath of fresh air for me and my family. The fact that we have been trying to deal with irresponsible and/or incompetent caretakers from a distance of 2,000 miles has made our tasks even more difficult.

The fact that you and your staff have been there has meant a great deal to us. Every person in your office that I have spoken to has made me feel that they were concerned and truly cared about the care provided to those who live in skilled nursing facilities. There really is no way to express our feelings, so I hope that the two simple words - thank you - will convey the depth of our appreciation to Ms. Schlemmer, you and your entire staff.

Ms. Jennings, please tell your people that the community that they serve is appreciative of the work they do. We are all (and this includes conscientious health care professionals) better off because of the vigilance of such people as Ms. Schlemmer and yourself and your staff.

Thank you
Name withheld,
California

New EBT cards go statewide

(Continued from page 1)

Benefits of the new system include greater accountability, more convenient access, and relief for merchants from the burdensome task of processing paper coupons, Neuhauser said.

Users are also freed from the stigma that many believe is attached to paying for groceries with food stamps.

In cases where recipients get food stamps as well as cash assistance, separate electronic accounts for each benefit are maintained on the same QUEST card. Rules limiting the food stamp account to eligible food items are unchanged; there is no restriction on withdrawals from the cash account up to the authorized monthly total.

The program was initiated successfully in southwest Washington last March. Another 13 counties in northeast Washington were added in June, five more were added in July, six more in August,

and two more in September. DSHS implemented the EBT system in the final county (King County) in October.

The Federal Government mandated all food stamp benefits be issued via EBT by Oct. 1, 2002. Washington chose to add cash benefits including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance, Refugee Assistance and Consolidated Emergency Assistance

Program to the EBT accounts in addition to state and federal food stamps.

Washington is part of a seven-state coalition, the Western States EBT alliance (WSEA) obtaining EBT services through Citicorp Services, Inc. The other states are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho and Nevada.

For more information on EBT, contact Renia Neuhauser (360) 413-3309.

The News Connection is online

The News Connection is available on both the DSHS Internet and Intranet home pages. The Internet address is <http://www.wa.gov/dshs>. The Intranet address is <http://intra.wa.gov/>. The newsletter is available in both PDF and text only formats. In order to view the newsletter, which is a PDF (portable document format) file, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. It is free software. If you need assistance with this, contact your computer information consultant.

Sharing our successes and commitment to
reaching beyond the expected to the excellent

Quality IN DSHS

Creating a learning environment for quality

The mission of the department drives everything we do, including our many Quality Improvement efforts. In recent issues of *The NewsConnection*, we have informed you of numerous projects that “improve the quality of life for individuals” and “help people achieve safe, self-sufficient, healthy, and secure lives.”

Projects are not the only way that we support the department mission or implement Quality Improvement in our organization. To achieve our goals, we need to empower employees, continuously improve, listen to our customers, and make decisions based on data. Our world is changing fast. To do any of these things well, and avoid paying “lip service” to these principles, one thing is key: we need to foster a learning environment, where employees keep abreast of best practices, feel encouraged to think “outside the box,” and test new ways to improve services.

In this issue of *The NewsConnection*, you will get a glimpse of some of the many ways our department is encouraging learning, as well as some practical information on training resources. Because these pages are devoted to Quality Improvement, our emphasis is on ways we are learning about and from quality improvement efforts. Learning, of course, goes on in many other ways as well.

LEARNING AT AASA – OUR CLIENTS AND COACHES LEAD THE WAY

In the turbulent, ever-changing environment of long-term care, AASA has been on a learning curve since its inception. Over the years, we have learned a lot from our clients: they tell us they want service options, and to get care in their own home whenever possible. In responding to this need, we have been continuously learning how to balance client choice with quality and cost-effectiveness. Part of our learning has included trying innovative new ways to deliver services. Lately, we are learning ways to integrate our information systems to better serve clients.

With the advent of Quality Improvement, we have tried to make our learning more systematic. For example, we have implemented customer surveys so we have a more objective way of determining customer perceptions. As more and more AASA staff try their hand at Quality Improvement projects, they are learning to establish measurable goals for even small changes and evaluate results based on data.

To help inculcate the principles of CQI within AASA, we have established 22 coaches to mentor AASA staff throughout the state. These coaches are trained in CQI – many of them have advanced training. On Oct. 28, the coaches met at SeaTac for the day to enhance their skills: (a) developing project plans, (b) establishing measurable goals, and (c) publicizing results. Our coaches, along with our clients, play a critical role in encouraging a learning environment within AASA.



Wally Vlasak, a trainer with the Office of Organization and Employee Development (OOED), facilitates a recent training of AASA employees.

CA – LEARNING TO FOCUS ON WHAT WE NEED

Early on in implementing the Governor’s Initiative on Quality Improvement, the Children’s Administration invested heavily in training staff as quality facilitators and team trainers. Employees from all parts of the state volunteered or were selected because of their attributes as quality champions. Johnson and Johnson Associates, Inc., the vendor of choice, trained 40 facilitators and five team trainers. The charge was to go forth and set up teams.

Translating curricula designed for business into something useful for a public child welfare agency was a great challenge. We got the point about gathering data loud and clear. We wanted to use the tools we were taught. Early teams gathered enough data to fill a three-ring binder. “But what does it tell you about the problem,” the facilitator would implore, only to be met with blank stares. Gradually, as with all the steps in quality improvement, we learned to focus our data gathering efforts towards just as much as we needed to know. We say thank you to those early teams for letting us learn with you.

We are now using this approach to accomplish any sort of change. Defining the problem, understanding the customers and suppliers, including all the process owners, coming to agreement on a charter, working as a team, testing solutions and measuring results all produce a better end product. And when justified with data, it’s hard to argue with the solution.

The last team that we trained gives us testimony to the value of our investment. Nine of the 12 participants called the training... “one of the best”... “efficient and stimulating”... “the best training... practical, goal focused and useable”... “excellent.”

Our teams are enthusiastic and successful and, when that happens, people notice and they want to be part of the change.

QUALITY: THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS IN ESA

The past several years have seen some of the most significant changes in the welfare system in decades — and the changes have had a major impact on how we do business.

We’ve had to learn how to do a lot of new things, and we’ve had to learn to do the old things better to improve service to our clients. Helping people find jobs, become self-sufficient, and move off public assistance is the goal of WorkFirst. But virtually everything we knew and did had to change to make it happen effectively — our systems, our staffing, our training, our performance measures, our facilities, our support services, and our community relationships.

While the first steps may have been difficult and faltering, we’ve made great strides. We’ve established results and outcome-based performance measures for most of our programs that we continue to meet or exceed.

And with implementation of the quality initiative, we’ve gotten more and more people who **do** the work involved in making the changes. The quality initiative helps us separate the “what” from the “how” — management sets the policy (the “what”) and engages staff, through the use of quality concepts and principles, in developing the best means to accomplish our outcomes (the “how”).

We’ve trained staff, chartered quality improvement teams, and implemented their recommendations. We’ve seen the benefit from using the expertise of front line staff and top management working side by side to solve problems.

Now we want to change the way we look at quality improvement and the quality initiative. We want to stop counting things and activities and focus even more on the results. We want quality to truly be part of how we do business, a way of thinking and acting that permeates the organization from top management to front line staff. Whether it’s deciding how to ensure quality medical evidence for eligibility determinations or rearranging the waiting room, we believe the quality approach is working!

CONTINUING TO FOCUS ON QUALITY IN HRSA

In the Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration (HRSA) we are committed to providing continuous quality public services to our clients by encouraging and accepting innovative ideas and approaches that improve those services. Currently, we have more than 60 quality improvement teams working on process improvements. Empowering our employees is a key to the success of those projects.

Recently we hosted a one-day participatory workshop for the HRSA Management Team and Quality Improvement Steering Committee members that role modeled individual and organizational excellence and focused on enhancing results through empowerment. Working with an

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Creating a culture for learning quality

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expert on bringing quality into the workplace, we gathered new skills and pragmatic tools. These will enable us to step back, reassess, and refine our focus on quality improvement concepts and techniques that will improve results and our ability to respond to client needs.

A special emphasis was placed on encouraging managers to develop an ongoing collaborative process of providing direction and feedback to their staff, a process that encourages and builds enthusiasm for continuous quality improvement initiatives.

We discussed what respect looks like, sounds like and feels like for both the giver and the receiver. One participant noted, "I know I'm respected when I'm included, I'm listened to, and occasionally my input is put to use."

Renee Ewing, the governor's Special Assistant for Quality Improvement, shared the governor's continuing commitment to using the quality improvement approach in state government. She noted that there will also be an increased emphasis on improving customer satisfaction, measuring our performances better, ensuring we have a learning environment so that we not only see where we are but what we've learned, and continuing to empower our employees.

JRA'S CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF VALUES

The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) recognizes an organization's "culture" is often something that happens, rather than something consciously designed, supported, and reinforced. Encouraged by the Governor's "Quality Initiative," JRA is establishing a framework for our "culture" through our vision, mission, core values, and goals. This framework clearly and consciously emphasizes the importance of what we value: community protection, youth accountability and competency development, staff development and participation, program accountability, and collaboration with stakeholders.

Within this framework, we are engaging in multiple activities to improve how we do business by creating opportunities to learn from each other and about ourselves. Examples include: developing performance measures based on input from internal and external stakeholders throughout the state; developing ways to improve our ability to meet the needs of youth and their families throughout the JRA continuum of care; developing a consolidated contract process to better meet customer needs; enhancing information systems to improve JRA communication; expanding staff involvement in decision-making through local quality steering committees; and work is being done so employees can clearly see their role in achieving JRA's mission and goals.

All of these activities are linked to our goals and are based on the input and involvement of internal and external customers. Of equal importance, they are avenues enabling us to develop and expand trust by providing customers with an opportunity to be heard, involved in improving what we do, and a part of the "culture" changes taking place. As in any "learning environment," building this fundamental framework and level of trust is key to success.

MAA BUILDS QUALITY CULTURE THROUGH CONFERENCE AND AWARDS

The Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) will hold its second annual Quality Day (QD 2000) on March 16, 2000 at the Town Square Campus in Olympia. The theme for QD 2000 is **Measuring Our Successes**. Both work teams and cross-divisional teams are encouraged to develop displays focused on performance measures and results. In addition to the displays, there will be videos and a guest speaker.

MAA implemented a new Employee Recognition Program in August. There are two different awards: the Cause for Applause award and the QUILL award. The Cause for Applause is an informal award that can be given to anyone at anytime for anything. In addition to a certificate, the recipient receives a hand clapper.

The QUILL award is a formal award based on outstanding performance. QUILL stands for *Quality, Unity, Initiative, Leadership and Learning*, which are the criteria for this award. Individuals may be nominated for one criterion, a combination of criteria or for all five. A



Each of the eight administrations has steering committees to assist in leading the department's efforts to continue providing quality services to the residents of the state of Washington. For more information on the quality improvement activities occurring throughout the department, contact Cheryl Stephani, internal quality consultant, at (360) 902-7783 or e-mail at stephcs@dshs.wa.gov or Solomon Uwadiale, executive management consultant, at (360) 902-7649 or e-mail uwadism@dshs.wa.gov. Please visit the DSHS Intranet Quality Improvement site at intra.dshs.wa.gov/news.htm for ongoing updates of plans, successes, and accomplishments.

member of the MAA Employee Recognition Team reviews the nomination to ensure that it meets the requirements for outstanding performance.

The successful nominations are scored by the Employee Recognition Team and the highest scoring nomination is the MAA Employee of the Month for the following month.

MAA has developed and offers a **Teaming for Success** curriculum to assist teams in achieving results. The curriculum consists of four work sessions to develop a purpose statement and identify customers, develop ground rules, agree on roles and responsibilities and develop performance measures.

It also includes four half-day seminars on Effective Meeting Management, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (based on the Myers/Briggs Type Indicator), Enhanced Communication and Conflict Resolution. This training has been well-received and is given upon request.

MSA SUSTAINS QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS BY CONTINUOUS LEARNING

To further advance employees' involvement in continuous learning in Management Services Administration, the MSA Quality Steering Committee is recruiting members from throughout the administration to serve on its four subcommittees: (1) Employee Recognition Subcommittee, (2) Communication and Involvement Subcommittee, (3) Eliminating Barriers Subcommittee, and (4) Innovation Subcommittee. Each subcommittee will present its workplan at the November Steering Committee meeting.

Some of the items discussed by the subcommittees include establishing team awards and innovation awards, sponsoring Balanced Scorecard Conference, chartering teams to tackle barriers, publishing tips for innovation, and publishing MSA Web Page.

In May 1999 approximately 120 employees attended a one-day conference on Trust, Creativity and Risk Taking sponsored by the MSA Quality Steering Committee. The participatory approach of the conference was well received. The conference focused on ways to involve employees in dialogues and practices around quality improvement. The committee will consider sponsoring another conference on these topics based on the results of the follow-up survey.

In addition to Quality Steering Committee's efforts, each division within MSA is also leading efforts to encourage learning and sharing knowledge. For example, the Administrative Services Division embarked a Mentoring Program in October 1999. Approximately 20 people volunteered to participate in this program as mentors or learning partners. The Employee Services Division now has on-line training for new personnel representatives. The division also provides Customer Service training to all of its employees. All these activities help move MSA employees forward in their pursuit of achieving quality improvements in all facets of their work.

OOED offers classes for those seeking more knowledge about quality

The Office of Organization and Employee Development offers many classes for those seeking more knowledge on quality improvement approaches. To register for any class, simply fill out DSHS Form 3-160(x), have your supervisor sign, and submit it through your HRD designee. Check the OOED Web site at <http://147.56.85.14/esd/ooed> for more detailed information.

- ◆ **Achieving Extraordinary Customer Relations**
... a two day customer service workshop developed for state government employees.
- ◆ **Understanding People Through Strengths (formally know as Bi/Polar)**
... a two day seminar for increasing relationship effectiveness between individual and team members.
- ◆ **Group Facilitation Methods**
... a two day workshop on group facilitation methods.
- ◆ **Participatory Strategic Planning**
... a two day workshop that presents a structured planning process.
- ◆ **Successful Teaming**
... a one-day workshop that helps teams achieve higher performance.
- ◆ **Team Power And Continuous Process Improvement**
... a one day workshop that lets teams experience the steps of Continuous Process Improvement.
- ◆ **Basic Awareness Train-The-Trainer**
... a three day workshop that certifies participants to conduct the Basic Awareness Workshop.
- ◆ **Basic Awareness For Managers**
... a one day introductory Continuous Process Improvement workshop for supervisors and managers.

Sharing WorkFirst successes and future challenges

Over 1,700 representatives of the numerous WorkFirst partners gathered recently in Yakima to share best practices, celebrate successes, and share enthusiasm for continued success with Washington’s program to get people off public assistance and into jobs that support self sufficiency.

Gov. Gary Locke repeatedly thanked the attendees for the remarkable successes this state has achieved in moving people to financial independence.

“Our tremendous success is because of your efforts, the incredible culture change that has taken place in all the partner agencies,” said Gov. Locke. “I know none of this could have been accomplished without your work and your dedication to make this all possible. Thank you very much.”

The governor handed out



WorkFirst partners from across the state gathered in Yakima to share successes, tips and enthusiasm.

\$300,000 in High Performance Bonus Checks to local partnerships across the state with sustained achievement. These funds can be used at the discretion of the partnership members to reduce peoples’ need to receive support from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

Receiving High Performance Bonus Awards were:

\$36,000 — **Snohomish County**, Everett CSO, Alderwood CSO, Sky Val-

ley CSO, Smokey Point CSO, Everett Job Service Center, Lynnwood Job Service Center, ESD WorkFirst offices in Everett, Lynnwood, Sky Valley and Smokey Point, Everett Division of Child Support, Edmonds Community College, Everett Community College, Snohomish County PIC, Snohomish County Human Services, Service Alternatives for Washington, Workforce Development, Tulalip Tribes, Sauk Suiattle Tribe, Stilliquamish Tribe

\$36,000 — **Spokane & Lincoln Counties**, Spokane East CSO, Spokane North CSO, Spokane SW and Central CSO, Davenport CSO, WorkSource Spokane, Spokane Job Service Center, Spokane office of Division of Child Support (DCS), Comm. Colleges of Spokane, CTED, Spokane City/County Employment and Training Consortium, Spokane PIC

\$36,000 — **Yakima & Kittitas Counties**, Yakima CSO; Yakima-Kittitas CSO; Grandview CSO; Ellensburg CSO; Sunnyside CSO; Wapato CSO; Toppenish CSO; DSHS Region 2; Yakima/Kittitas County WorkFirst offices, ESD; Cascade East Region, ESD; Yakima Valley Community College; Yakima DCS; the Yakama Nation; People for People; Yakima Valley OIC; Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic; Tri-Valley PIC; Columbia Legal Services; I.A.M. CARES

\$24,000 — **Burien, W. Seattle, & Renton**, West Seattle CSO, Renton CSO, Burien CSO, ESD offices in Burien Renton, West Seattle, Seattle office of the DCS, South Seattle Comm. College, Highline Comm. College, Renton Comm. College, WPLEX, Welfare-to-Work, King County Jobs Initiative, Seattle Jobs Initiative, YWCA of Seattle-King and Snohomish Counties, Refugee Federation Service Center, TRAC Associates, Pacific and Associates, Puget Sound ECEAP

\$24,000 — **North Seattle**, Ballard CSO, Lake City CSO, North Seattle WorkSource, Seattle office of the DCS, North Seattle Comm. College, Shoreline Comm. College, Welfare to Work PIC, WPLEX

\$12,000 — **South King County**, Kent CSO, Federal Way CSO, Kent ESD, Federal Way ESD, Auburn Workforce Center, Seattle office of DCS,

Highline Comm. College, Green River Comm. College, Renton Technical College, WVEE Program, South King County Multi-Service Center, Seattle-King County PIC

\$12,000 — **King County Eastside**, King Eastside CSO, Bellevue WorkSource Center, Bellevue Comm. College, Lake Washington Technical College, Seattle office of DCS, Jewish Family Services, Multi-Service Centers of North and East King County



Terry Covey, Region 1 WorkFirst coordinator, holds high a \$36,000 high performance bonus award check earned by WorkFirst partners in Spokane and Lincoln Counties.

\$12,000 — **Benton & Franklin Counties**, Kennewick CSO, Pasco CSO, Tri-Cities JSC, Kennewick field office of the Division of Child Support, Columbia Basin College, Benton-Franklin PIC, Ben Franklin Transit, Goodwill Industries, Columbia Industries, Sunderland Family Treatment Services, Benton-Franklin Comm. Action Comm.

\$12,000 — **Whidbey Island**, Oak Harbor CSO, Mt. Vernon JSC, Skagit Valley College, Northwest Washington PIC, Everett office of DCS

\$12,000 — **Kitsap County**, Bremerton CSO, Bremerton Job Service Center, Division of Child Support, Olympic College, Olympic Consortium PIC, Kitsap Community Resources, Kitsap County Personnel & Human Services, Bremerton Job Training Center, Bremerton DVR, Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, Suquamish Tribe

\$12,000 — **Okanogan County**, Okanogan CSO, Okanogan County JSC, Okanogan County WorkSource, Cascade East Region, ESD, Wenatchee field office of the Division of Child Support, Wenatchee Valley College, Big Bend Comm. College, JTPA Okanogan County, Pentad PIC, Okanogan County Comm. Action Career Path Services, Colville Confederated Tribes, Rainier Case Management

\$12,000 — **Pierce County**, Pierce North CSO, Pierce South CSO, Pierce West CSO, Puyallup CSO, ESD WF offices at Pierce North, South, West & Puyallup, Tacoma office of DCS, Pierce College, Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Tacoma Comm. College, DCTED, Tacoma/ Pierce County PIC, Chuckal, Inc. Pierce County Social Services, Pierce County Comm. Action, Metropolitan Development Council, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

\$12,000 — **Skagit & San Juan Counties & Camano Island**, Mt. Vernon CSO, Mt. Vernon WorkFirst office, Everett office of DCS, Skagit Valley College, NW Washington PIC, Upper Skagit Tribe

\$12,000 — **Thurston County**, Olympia CSO, Olympia JSC, South Puget Sound Comm. College, DCTED, Olympia office of DCS, Pacific Mountain PIC, Housing Authority of Thurston County, Morningside

\$12,000 — **Walla Walla & Columbia Counties**, Walla Walla CSO, Walla Walla JSC, Walla Walla Comm. College, Blue Mountain Action Council, Walla Walla WorkSource, Kennewick office of DCS, Eastern Washington Partnership PIC, WPLEX

\$12,000 — **Whatcom County**, Bellingham CSO, Bellingham ESD, Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Comm. College, Region 5, DCS, Lummi Nation, NW PIC

\$12,000 — **Whitman County**, Colfax CSO, Pullman JSC, DCS, DCFS of Whitman County, DDD, Early Learning Services, Community Action Center, Palouse Industries, Wilson Psychological Services, Whitman County Counseling Services, Eastern Washington Partnership PIC, NE Washington Rural Resources, Whitman/Asotin County Child Care Resource & Referral, Comm. Child Care

Diversity Calendar

Throughout the year *The News Connection* features special dates, provided by the Division of Access and Equal Opportunity. If you have a date you would like included in the calendar, contact Patte King at KingPL@dsht.wa.gov. Not all dates can be included because of length constraints.

NOVEMBER

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT MONTH

3 Japan Culture Day

11 Veteran's Day

14 India: Children's Day

16 Scotland: Feast of St. Margaret

17 England: Queen Elizabeth Day

20 U.N. Rights of the Child Day

24 Hmong New Year Day

25 Thanksgiving Day

26 State Holiday
Sojourner Truth Day

DECEMBER

NATIONAL DISABILITIES MONTH

1 Rosa Parks Day

3 Hanukkah begins at Sunset

6 Ramadan begins

7 Ivory Coast: Independence Day

10 Human Rights Day

12 Mexico: Lady of Guadalupe
Festival Day

13 Sweden: Santa Lucia Day

16 Posadas

22 First Day of Winter

25 Christmas Day

26 Kwanza African American
Family Celebration

What service levels do public assistance customers want?

The Governor's office recently contracted with Washington State University Research Center to conduct a statewide telephone survey in July and August. The survey was to determine quality of service provided by state agencies and identify customer expectations.

The DSHS Research and Data Division has compared the responses of people who used public assistance with the general population of users of government services.

A total of 874 households were reached in this WSU survey. Six hundred and thirteen people used at least one government service and were asked detailed questions about one of those services. Eighty-four people used “public assistance services,” but only 48 people were asked about those services. Confidence intervals around the 48-person estimates are large, which means even large differences between our customers and all customers will not always reach “statistical significance” thresholds.

For each question asked in the survey, the table below shows the point estimate (in the middle) and the 95 percent confidence interval around it for both public assistance clients and all state agency customers. Questions where our customers’ answers were significantly different are shaded.

The survey results support the DSHS decision to improve telephone access. Ninety-two percent of our customers said it was important to speak with a real person on the telephone. Thirty-eight percent of our customers said that improved phone service was the most important accessibility priority.

The results also suggest that courtesy and “getting it right” are very important. Only 70 percent of our customers said that in the end they got what they needed and were treated courteously and respectfully, as compared to 90 percent of all state agency customers.

	Customers Asked About Public Assistance	All State Agency Customers
Highlights		
Government has a more difficult task providing services than private sector	71%	66%
Quality of government services has improved over the past two years	61%	60%
Employees treat public fairly regardless of age, gender, race, culture or ability	70%	71%
State employees who deal directly with public are properly trained & qualified	58%	59%
Most important aspect of service is ability of staff to solve problems with you	59%	63%
Most important aspect of service is how long you have to wait to get service	21%	18%
State services get a good overall grade	56-70%-83	80%
In the end you got what you needed, without error, by a staff that was courteous, competent and respectful	56-70%-84	90%
Expectations		
I expect better service from government than from private sector	50%	44%
I expect the same level of service from government as from private sector	44%	50%
It is VERY important to reach a real person rather than voice mail	92%	82%
I prefer to contact an agency by telephone	53%	66%
I prefer to contact an agency in person	34%	24%
I prefer to use Internet or Web	2%	6%
Acceptable time to wait for voice or email return was:	Same day	One day
Acceptable time to wait for letter return was:	5 days	1 week
Priority Recommendations for Improvement		
Are you generally satisfied with how accessible government service is?	90%	86%
Improve access by improving phone reach	38%	22%
Improve access by adding more ways of access (Internet, Web, e-mail, fax)	29%	40%
Improve access by making it easier to find out how to get service	57%	58%
Improve access by making staff more competent	17%	32%
Improve access by providing more up-to-date information	38%	31%
<i>Editor's note: If people asked what was meant by public assistance, they were read the following statement. "Public assistance: Also known as welfare. Is a cash benefit or payment provided by the state. Also includes state-provided benefits such as food stamps, medical assistance coupons, WorkFirst employment assistance; child care assistance or day care subsidies; state provided long term health care assistance."</i>		
<i>For more information on the customer survey and public assistance related responses, contact Liz Kohlenberg, director Division of Research and Data Analysis, at (360) 902-070.</i>		